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Wednesday, February 28, 2018

Volume 106, No. 78

THE DAILY MISSISSIPPIAN

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI SERVING OLE MISS AND OXFORD SINCE 1911 Visit theDMonline.com @thedm_news

Vigil honors Florida shooting victims

KATHRYN ABERNATHY
STAFF WRITER

Members of the Ole Miss and Oxford communities came together Tuesday night to walk in the “A Walk for Champions” vigil in honor of the survivors and lives lost in the Feb. 14 Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Parkland, Florida.

Lexy Johnson, a senior integrated marketing communications major who graduated from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in 2014, organized the walk for her alma mater.

“Parkland is my first home, and Oxford is my second home, and everyone here is family to me, so it’s great seeing that my second family in Oxford is showing support for my first family in south Florida,” she said.

Johnson said she decided to organize the walk because she couldn’t be there alongside her former classmates to show condolences to the families affected.

“I knew I needed to do something here to show that we support them and we stand with them,” Johnson said. “Wednesday is their first day back at school so it actually worked out great that they get



PHOTO BY: WILSON BENTON

Lexy Johnson, a former student at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, speaks to the community Tuesday at a vigil held for the victims of the Feb. 14 shooting. The tragedy was one of the deadliest school massacres in world history.

SEE **VIGIL** PAGE 3

DM STAFF REPORT

ASB officer debate tonight

Candidates for the Associated Student Body executive officers will participate in a moderated debate tonight, presenting their platforms and answering questions. The debate will take place at 5:30 p.m. at the Overby Center.

The debate will be done in segments, having all of the candidates for each position on stage at the same time. Candidates will be asked direct questions from the moderator to answer.

Interfraternity Council President Bennett Wilfong will moderate tonight’s debate, asking prepared questions and questions submitted via a Google Survey that was posted to the Ole Miss ASB Facebook page and sent out to all ASB senators who have served in the past year.

Presidential candidates include Wister Hitt, Elam Miller, Emily Tipton and Dylan Wood. Walker Abel is running unopposed for vice president. Candidates for judicial chair are Alex Crouch and Bea Tisher. Austin Fiala and Katherine Sistrunk are running for attorney general, and Jonathan Cox is running unopposed for treasurer. No one is on the ballot for secretary.

DEBATE COVERAGE

See theDMonline for coverage of tonight’s debate and bios of the candidates, our Facebook page for live streaming and follow @thedm_news on Twitter for live updates during candidates’ remarks.

UM installs 6 contextualization plaques

BLAKE ALSUP
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Six plaques created to add context to monuments and buildings on campus were installed yesterday in advance of a planned unveiling event this weekend.

The markers were delivered and installed by Columbus Marble Works and could be seen around campus Tuesday with the university logo covering the inscriptions until Friday.

The plaques were made to add context to Confederate monuments on campus and

certain buildings built by slaves or named after men with ties to slavery.

Plaques have been placed at Longstreet Hall, George Hall, Lamar Hall, Barnard Observatory, Ventress Hall for the University Greys memorial window along with one to recognize the enslaved laborers who were used to construct some of the first buildings on campus, including the Lyceum.

The installation comes almost two years after Chancellor Jeffrey Vitter wrote a letter to the Ole Miss community in March 2016 to

present his plan to form the Chancellor’s Advisory Committee on History and Context (CACHC).

Vitter saw a need for the committee after a new contextualization plaque installed on the front of the Confederate statue at the Lyceum Circle brought complaints from some in the community. The committee received suggestions to change the wording of the plaque and include more community input before the plaque language was drafted.

From start to finish, the new plaques and

inscriptions were in planning and development for almost two years.

“This event was announced in December and is a culmination of the work completed by the Chancellor’s Advisory Committee on History and Context,” said Ryan Whittington, UM marketing and brand strategy director.

The Contextualization Plaque Unveiling Event will begin with a ceremony at 11 a.m. Friday at the Gertrude C. Ford Center for the Performing Arts.

SEE **PLAQUES** PAGE 3

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COLUMN

Media turned Florida shooting into politics



TYLER JORDON
STAFF WRITER

On Feb. 14, the nation was, yet again, witness to another school shooting. Nineteen-year-old Nikolas Cruz walked into the school he had been expelled from, Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, and murdered 17 former classmates with an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle.

As usual, the media used a school shooting to advance their agendas from attacking President Donald Trump to advocating for looser or stricter gun control.

Let's take, for example, how a left-wing media organization, like The Washington Post, has used this tragedy to advance its agendas.

It went to great lengths, including using a survivor's interview with other news stations, to advance its anti-Trump agenda. For example, one school-shooting survivor, in reference to President Trump, said, "You sicken me."

In order to push for gun control, The Washington Post furthered this with a quote from a survivor's speech that was relaying a teacher's comment: "When adults tell me I have the right to own a gun, all I can hear is my right to own a gun outweighs your student's right to live."

Fox News, a right-wing news organization, had no problem pushing against gun control measures just days after the shooting. When pressed on the issue, Fox News contributor Keith Ablow, a psychiatrist, said, "Please don't get distracted by thinking this is a gun issue. It isn't. All you'll have is a creative killer if you disarm the killer. They'll use something else."

The media didn't stop there. When several survivors from the school shooting took buses to Tallahassee, Florida, to advocate for the state Legisla-

ture to ban assault weapons in the state of Florida, the media had no problem inviting themselves aboard the buses to interview students.

You may wonder how this was troubling. But think about it – the time on the bus was for the students to collectively grieve and to prepare for what most definitely was an immense form of closure to the victims if the legislation was passed.

The insensitive media, as always, disregarded the victim's privacy, just so that they could get a story. Pathetic.

Above all, what is most disgusting is how instead of creating unity among the victims, the media divided them. When Fox News interviewed a survivor about gun control, he said he believes many of his classmates are uninformed about guns and are just going along with the perceived popular opinion.

It is absolutely fine for this student to believe his classmates are uninformed, but it is completely unprofessional of Fox News to publish that statement.

Do you think that, in a time

of post-tragedy, when emotions are high, his classmates will not have an issue with his public ridicule of their beliefs?

After a tragedy, the media should only report the facts of the story and recognize the heroes who sacrificed their lives so others could live.

For example, a few media sources have talked about Peter Wang's heroic actions. Wang was a 15-year-old JROTC student who died helping his classmates escape. For his heroism, Peter was posthumously awarded an appointment to West Point, an academy he dreamed of attending.

His story should be all over headline news, but it's not. Instead, the media have diverted their attention and resources to advancing their agendas, which has divided not only the survivors but also the rest of the country.

The media outlets are at the point of no return of being worthy of the American public's respect.

Tyler Jordon is a senior political science major from Charleston, West Virginia.

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MISSISSIPPIAN

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The Daily Mississippian welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should be e-mailed to dmletters@olemiss.edu.

Letters should be typed, double-spaced and no longer than 300 words. Letters may be edited for clarity, space or libel. Third-party letters and those bearing pseudonyms, pen names or "name withheld" will not be published. Publication is limited to one letter per individual per calendar month.

Letters should include phone and email contact information so that editors can verify authenticity. Letters from students should include grade classification and major; letters from faculty and staff should include title and the college, school or department where the person is employed.



MISSISSIPPI
press
ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSPAPER



VIGIL

continued from page 1

as much support as they can before they walk into those doors tomorrow.”

The walk, which took participants from the Walk of Champions to the Lyceum, was recorded on video and sent to Ty Thompson, the principal of MSD High School. Johnson said she hopes the video offers encouragement to students and faculty.

Johnson gave a speech before the event to thank those who came out and remind them of the importance of the walk.

“We aren’t gathered here tonight to talk about the senseless act of gun violence but instead to honor the victims affected by this tragedy,” Johnson said. “We want to be the light in their darkness and guide them through this really dark and tragic time. They’re Eagles. We want to help them soar again.”

The Meek School of Journalism and New Media sponsored the walk, and many faculty and staff, like integrated marketing communications instructor Debbie Woodrick Hall, helped Johnson put the walk together.

“Alexa is one of my current students, and I found out this week that one of my former students actually has a younger sister that was

Members of the community meet in front of the Lyceum on Tuesday for a vigil in honor of the 17 victims of the Feb. 14 school shooting in Florida. The event was hosted by senior Alexa Johnson, who attended Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.



A student holds her "Parkland Strong" bracelet up in the rain at the vigil held Tuesday for the victims of the Feb. 14 school shooting in Parkland, Florida.

in the building when the shooter began attacking those students,” Hall said. “This one hit home to me. It’s very close to my heart.”

Hall said she participated in the walk to support not only those affected by this shooting but also those taking a stand in Oxford and in Parkland.

"I think they're going to make a difference, and I'm proud of them," Hall said. "I want to support our kids and the kids in Florida, as well."

Caroline Franco, a sophomore general business major, was also in attendance last night due to her personal connection with the recent event.

"I'm from Fort Lauderdale, and it was a big impact on our entire community," Franco said. "Also, just everyone

needs to support this, whether you're from south Florida or not. It's a great group of people, and they need the support now more than ever."



Plaques will be unveiled Friday to give contextualization to historic sites on campus.

PLAQUES

continued from page 1

The keynote address will be given by John R. Neff, associate professor of history and director of the Center for Civil War Research.

Chancellor Vitter; Katrina Caldwell, vice chancellor for diversity and community engagement; and Alice Clark, interim vice chancellor for

university relations, will also make remarks, according to Whittington.

He said student ambassadors will read each of the plaques during the ceremony.

Following the event, shuttles will take attendees from the Ford Center to the new plaque sites, where student representatives and a member of the CACHC will be available to speak with attendees.

The advertisement features a dark background with a large, stylized white outline of the state of Mississippi. At the top, the text "NOW ACCEPTING" is in a bold, white, sans-serif font. Below it, "OLE MISS" is written in a large, bold, white, sans-serif font with a thick black outline. Underneath "OLE MISS", the word "Flex" is written in a large, white, cursive script font with a thick black outline. In the bottom left corner, there is a circular logo for Papa John's. It features a man in a dark shirt and a white apron with the Papa John's logo. The text "BETTER INGREDIENTS. BETTER PIZZA." is written in a white, sans-serif font around the top of the circle. Below the circle, the words "PIZZA" and "PAPA JOHN'S" are written in a white, sans-serif font. In the bottom right corner, there is a dark rectangular box with the text "Rated #1" in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below it, "Customer Satisfaction & Product Quality" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the box, the text "Among QSR Pizza Chains in the American Customer Satisfaction Index" is written in a very small, white, sans-serif font. Below the box, the text "ACSI 2017" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font. In the center of the advertisement, the text "PROUD PARTNER" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. Below it, "with OLE MISS DINING" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the advertisement, the text "Sun.-Wed. 10:30am-1:00am, Thurs.-Sat. 10:30am-2:00am" is written in a white, sans-serif font.

Clint Smith delivers Black History Month keynote

DEVANTE TOLES
STAFF WRITER

Change was the topic of discussion Monday night in Fulton Chapel when Clint Smith, a national poetry slam champion, teacher and Ph.D. candidate at Harvard University, gave the Black History Month Keynote Address.

Smith talked about the United States' long history of slavery and how it took 250 years of abolitionism to bring about the change that ultimately brought the end of it.

"I've been taught how perfect my country was, but nobody ever told me about the pages torn out of my textbook," Smith said.

He said the were abolitionists from the first day slaves were brought into the country in 1619.

"There were people who recognized that this was fundamentally counter to the notions of justice and liberty that we established," he said.

Smith said that though a majority of abolitionists died before they could see the end of slavery in the United States, that does not mean that their work went to waste.

"While they didn't see the fruits of their labors, what it means is that they set up an



PHOTO BY: KIARA WILLIAMS

After Clint Smith delivers the Black History Month Keynote Address in Fulton Chapel, he autographs his book, "Counted Descents," for attendees Monday.

opportunity for activists, one day to take advantage of a moment," Smith said.

Shawnboda Mead, director of the Center for Inclusion and Cross Cultural Engagement, said that she was happy with the message the Smith brought forward.

"Our goal with a speaker during Black History Month or during any of our keynote addresses is to have a speaker that students, faculty and staff can connect with, resonate with, who challenges maybe some of the ideas ... but also make us think about more of the nuanc-

es within our own communities and our campus," Mead said.

Nekkita Beans, president of the Black Student Union, said she loved Smith's speech because it was extremely relatable.

"He didn't come here with his flowery language," Beans said. "He didn't come here pointing

fingers, just yelling and angry. He delivered his message in a way that was able to touch everybody in that room."

Senior business major Kenrick Wright said Smith's speech inspired him.

"Like he said, the job is not done and we might not see the end, but as long as we contribute and keep it going, that's the most important part," Wright said. "There is always a beginning and end, but the most important part is maintaining it."

Oxford local Eunice Benton attended the keynote address with her husband.

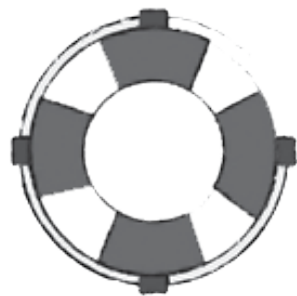
"It was a really powerful and a unique presentation that was not a lecture," Benton said. "He was engaging his whole audience. That was very important, and he didn't pull any punches or miss any words."

Smith's latest work "Counting Descent" won the 2017 Literary Award for Best Poetry Book

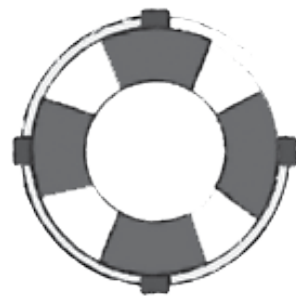
from the Black Caucus of the American Library Association and was a finalist for an NAACP Image Award.

He was named the Christine D. Sarbanes Teacher of the Year in 2013 by the Maryland Humanities Council, and his writing has appeared in The New Yorker, The Atlantic and some other major publications.

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Trustmark National Bank
The University of Mississippi Graduate
School
Waffle House, Inc
Walgreens

Pajama party to offer entertainment, inclusivity

LEXI PURVIS
STAFF WRITER

OutOxford is hosting its first pajama party-themed Code Pink Thursday at Proud Larry's.

The LGBTQ+ nonprofit organization OutOxford works to connect Oxford's queer community members with one another and allies alike. OutOxford has hosted a number of Code Pink events throughout the past year, including the Halloween "Babadook Ball," the Mardi Gras Ball at The Lyric, a community yoga class and more.

"We thought this pajama party would be really relaxing and a good ice-breaker for those who've never been to a Code Pink event before," Blake Summers, co-founder of OutOxford, said. "Anyone wearing anything is welcome, and that's what these events are about."

Summers helped establish OutOxford in 2017 with local support from individuals and groups like the Sarah Isom Center for Women and Gender Studies to produce these Code Pink events.

"I'm proud of Oxford to have community members open enough to allow these (Code Pink) events to happen, especially through a gay organization," Summers said. "Everywhere on the Square has been great and warm and friendly when trying to plan our events."

OutOxford has support not only from the LGBTQ+ community but also from allies. Student Kate Vana considers herself an ally within the LGBTQ+ community and has participated in many Code Pink events. She said she is excited for the pajama party Code Pink coming up.

"I've always had a passion for supporting the LGBTQ+ community. They have it rough, especially in the South, so I want to help any way that I can," Vana said. "I think it's important for people to meet those within the LGBT community because it breaks down a lot of barriers and helps you realize that we're really all not that different from each other."

Student Sarah Sgro will DJ at Proud Larry's for the event. Sgro has worked

other Code Pink parties, including the "Babadook Ball" and last September's "Thrift Store Scores."

"I love curating playlists for Code Pink events with my co-DJ Reggie and getting wild on stage in a safe space for queer folks," Sgro said. "Code Pink is the only party on the Square I know of organized for and by queer Oxo-nians and allies."

After selling out tickets and reaching capacity at previous Code Pink events, the organizers said they encourage participants to arrive early to get into the pajama party.

"Regardless of the theme, dress however you're most comfortable, and get there early. We've reached capacity an hour in at past events," Sgro said.

The pajama party will have something for all kinds of partygoers to experience, whether they want to hang out with their friends in a calm atmosphere surrounded by

blanket forts or party all night with drinks and dancing.

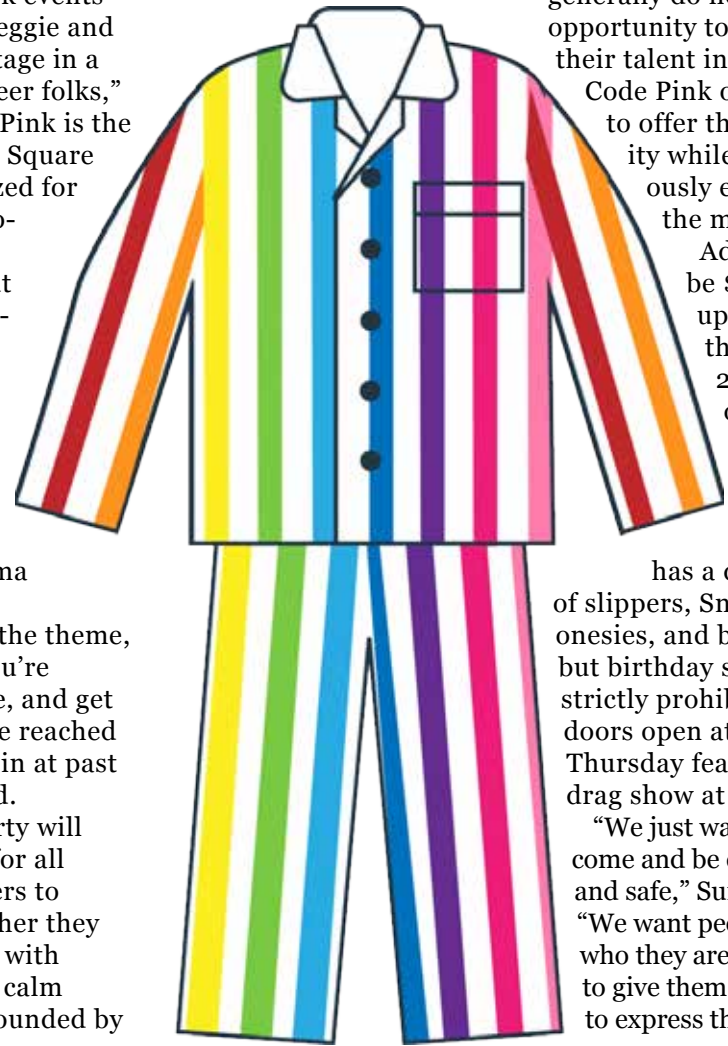
This Code Pink event will incorporate drag perfor-

mances, giving individuals a chance to dress up and show off their best dance moves in a safe environment. Drag performers generally do not have the opportunity to showcase their talent in Oxford, so Code Pink often works to offer them inclusivity while simultaneously entertaining the masses.

Admission will be \$5 for 21 and up and \$7 for those under 21 at the door of Proud Larry's and is open to 18 and up. The event

has a dress code of slippers, Snuggies, onesies, and boxers, but birthday suits are strictly prohibited. The doors open at 7:30 p.m. Thursday featuring the drag show at 10:30 p.m.

"We just want people to come and be comfortable and safe," Summers said. "We want people to be who they are, and we want to give them the freedom to express themselves."



GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION BY: EMILY HOFFMAN

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Professor, journalist explore incarcerations in new book

KIMBERLY RUSSELL
ONLINE EDITOR

A freshly published book that exposes some of Mississippi’s grittiest injustices was released Tuesday night, just down the street from Oxford’s own courthouse, at Off Square Books.

The room was packed as University of Mississippi School of Law Professor Tucker Carrington and his co-author, Washington Post reporter and investigative journalist Radley Balko, discussed and read excerpts from their new book, “The Cadaver King and the Country Dentist: A True Story of Injustice in the American South.”

The book tells the true story of a forensic pathologist, Steven Hayne, and a small-town dentist, Dr. Michael West. The men testified

in thousands of rape and murder trials throughout Mississippi and Louisiana that resulted in countless wrongful convictions.

The book focuses on select stories from those cases, including the wrongful convictions of Kennedy Brewer and Levon Brooks. Both men were accused of brutally raping and then killing two three-year-old girls. Hayne and West’s testimonies sealed their fate as they were wrongfully convicted. Brewer served 13 years on death row. Brooks served 16 years of a life sentence.

The University of Mississippi’s George C. Cochran Innocence Project helped Brewer and Brooks find exoneration.

The project was founded by Carrington back in 2006, when he first started working at the law school. In the beginning, Carrington had trouble finding work to do, but that



PHOTO BY: WILSON BENTON

Radley Balko and Tucker Carrington sign autographs for fans in their new book, “The Cadaver King and the Country Dentist” at Off Square Books on Tuesday.

changed quickly with a phone call from Balko.

“I ran to pick up the phone, and it was Radley asking me, ‘What the hell are you doing?’” Carrington said.

Balko was investigating Cory Maye’s case, the first case to link Hayne to suspicious autopsy reports. Maye was convicted of intentionally killing an officer during a police ambush on his house.

“Several medical examiners told me that (Hayne’s) testimony in that case just didn’t make a lot of sense,” Balko said.

Balko took the information to his personal blog and received responses from experts all over the country who testi-

fied against Hayne at trial.

“If there’s one thing that I’ve learned as an investigative journalist, it’s that if you find one example of that kind of thing, that’s probably not the only time that’s happened,” Balko said.

Third-year law student Brittany Barbee works in the George C. Cochran Innocence Project.

Barbee said she is proud to be a part of this work and hopes this book cautions attorneys to use better judgment when picking experts for testimony.

“Regardless of whether we, as attorneys, will be on the prosecution side or the defense side, we need to be aware that circumstances like this can oc-

cur,” Barbee said.

Carrington and Balko started researching and quickly discovered case after case with flawed testimony from Hayne. With this research, they realized they had enough to write their book. They anticipate real change to happen in its release.

“The hope with the book is that it will persuade state officials to do a really thorough, objective review of all of these cases,” Balko said.

“The Cadaver King and the Country Dentist” is out now. For information on the George C. Cochran Innocence Project, visit innocenceproject.olemiss.edu.

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SOLUTION TO 2.26.2018 PUZZLE

ACROSS

1 H.S. junior's exam

5 Truth ____

10 Bodybuilder's pride

14 Inter ____

15 Name on a bomber

16 Anthem opener

17 Camp for children

19 Acquire through work

20 Shoebox marking

21 Immature herring

22 Ripe

24 Black Sea port

26 Hindu queen

27 Capital of Utah

33 Southpaw

36 Man of many words?

37 "The Bells" poet

38 New Haven students

39 Ulan ____

40 Deep sleep

41 Paris possessive

42 Infomercial knife

43 Gives up

44 Sonar

47 Liver fluid

48 Mother ____

52 Summerhouse

55 Gal Fri.

57 The last letter of the Hebrew alphabet

DOWN

1 Stroll

2 Swung around

3 Anouk of "La Dolce Vita"

4 Scot's cap

5 Story in installments

6 Business letter abbr.

7 Highway

8 Einstein's birthplace

9 Cartographer

10 Kind of license or justice

11 Biblical birthright seller

12 Singer Vikki

13 Auld Lang ____

18 Composition

23 Work without ____

25 Fast jets, for short

26 Highly seasoned stew

28 Daze

58 Auction site

59 Convert to a semi-solid

62 Fork feature

63 Cara or Castle

64 Super server

65 Teen follower

66 Crawl

67 Not difficult

29 ____ luck!

30 Apple player

31 Big book

32 Votes for

33 ____ majesty

34 Util. bill

35 Aquatic vertebrate

39 Related by blood

40 Penny

42 Smooth-tongued

43 Raccoon relative

45 Compliant one

46 Foot part

49 Mohawk River city

50 Tears down

51 Each partner

52 "____ grip!"

53 You're making ____ mistake!

54 Writer Grey

55 "Hard ____!" (sailor's yell)

56 Having a sound mind

60 Blunder

61 Not for a Scot

Crossword puzzle provided by BestCrosswords.com (www.bestcrosswords.com). Used with permission.

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			2		9			
	4			5		2		
3			7	9		4		
		4		2	1			5
		9		8			6	
			1		5			
7						3	4	

HOW TO PLAY

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 with no repeats.

DIFFICULTY LEVEL

TOUGH

1	4	3	2	9	6	8	5	7
7	6	8	5	3	1	2	9	4
2	9	5	7	8	4	6	3	1
5	3	7	1	2	9	4	6	8
6	8	1	3	4	5	7	2	9
9	2	4	8	6	7	5	1	3
3	7	2	9	5	8	1	4	6
4	1	9	6	7	2	3	8	5
8	5	6	4	1	3	6	7	2

Luke making the most of spring practice window

JOHN MACON GILLESPIE
STAFF WRITER

Matt Luke is entering his first spring as the head coach of Ole Miss football, and his hopes are high for 2018.

Luke, who served last season as the Rebels' interim head coach after the departure of Hugh Freeze, will finally get to coach Ole Miss as his own for a full year after his interim tag was removed in December.

"I'm really excited to get started," Luke said. "We've got a good mixture, a lot of experience coming back. This spring, we want to focus on some of these young guys and get them quality reps."

Luke has helped lead the Rebels through the tumultuous conclusion of a five-year NCAA investigation while securing six wins in his inaugural season at the helm of the program, capped with a win over Mississippi State in the Egg Bowl.

"I felt like our culture really improved from the beginning of the season to the end of the season," Luke said. "We just want to keep building on that and the positive momentum of the Egg Bowl."

Ole Miss had the No. 30 recruiting class in the nation in 2017, according to 247sports.com, an impressive feat considering the NCAA-related cloud that hung around the program in recent seasons. Luke is hoping to push the incoming freshmen and other young players to improve throughout the spring and build a foundation for future success.

"In the spring, you want to think about players not playing," Luke said. "You really want to focus on these young guys getting better. We've got six days here before spring break that we



PHOTO BY: TAYLAR TEEL

Head coach Matt Luke discusses blocking technique with the offensive line. Luke was granted the head coaching position after serving as the interim head coach last season.

really want to focus on getting these young guys reps."

Now with a full season under his and his coordinators' belts, Luke believes that this season could bring about an expansion of the Rebels' offensive and defensive schemes, especially as the athletes on the team mature and gain a better understanding of the system.

"I think we're already so much farther ahead now than we were going into fall camp last year," Luke said. "Since we've got the same

system on offense and defense, we're going to be way farther ahead from a schematic standpoint."

An interesting note heading into 2018 involves Walnut-native Armani Linton. The former safety will be making the transition to running back this year in hopes of earning more consistent minutes. Ole Miss' leading rusher from a season ago, Jordan Wilkins, exhausted his eligibility in 2017, so the Rebels' running back competition appears to be wide-open for the time being.

As far as changes unrelated to positions and schemes, Luke is hoping to see leaders emerge this spring and wants his team to continue building strong chemistry in 2018.

"I just want to see the culture continue to change," Luke said. "I want us to be a team. I don't want us to be offense and defense. I just want to see the team. I want

to see who the leaders are going to be."

Schools have 15 days set aside for spring football practices, and Luke is taking advantage of every second.

"You only 15 shots, and you've got to make every one of them count, and I think that's what we're focused on," Luke said.

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Rebels top Racers, thanks to walk-off home run

GRAYSON WEIR
SPORTS EDITOR

In its second midweek matchup of the 2018 season, Ole Miss baseball defeated Murray State 7-6 in walk-off fashion at Swayze Field on Tuesday.

With the game tied at six in the bottom of the ninth, Ole Miss' Thomas Dillard, who went three for four with three RBIs on the day, stepped up and stole the show. Leading off the inning with a single that poked through the right side, Dillard then advanced to third, thanks to a pair of walks. With the bases loaded, the Racers' closer sent a wild pitch past his catcher and toward the stands. The erratic throw sent 6-foot, 235-pound Dillard scrambling for home. Barreling down the third-base line, he beat the tag and brought the dugout onto the field to celebrate.

"I knew I was safe," Dillard said of the play that won Ole Miss its eighth straight game and kept the team undefeated. "It was a close play, but coach was telling me to be ready for anything, to be ready for a passed ball, so I listened to him and got in there."

After throwing four innings in his first collegiate start last Tuesday against Memphis, Houston Roth took the mound again for Ole Miss. Starting the game with a pair of strikes, he quickly found himself in trouble.

After walking the leadoff man, an error in the outfield left two runners on base for Davis Sims. The Murray State infielder stepped into the box and hit a homerun over the left-field wall to put the Racers up 3-0 with no outs. Roth continued to battle, recording two strike-

outs, but a walk and two doubles inflated the first half-innings' score to 4-0. Ole Miss could not convert in the bottom half, and the score remained the same through the first.

Returning to the mound after a tough first inning, Roth found his groove and retired 13 of the next 16 batters he faced. Throwing 80 pitches over five complete innings, the right-hander struck out six Racers and surrendered just four runs before Austin Miller entered in his relief.

"One of the big storylines is how (Roth) hung in there," head coach Mike Bianco said. "It showed why he's a freshman All-American, and that really may have won the game right there."

At the plate, the Rebels, who scored 46 runs through their first seven games of the season, found themselves able to get runners on base but could not convert through the first three innings. That changed quickly in the fourth, when a Cole Zabowski double scored Dillard from second and tallied the first run for the Rebels.

Their bats stayed hot in the fifth when Grae Kessinger led the inning off with a single, and Ryan Olenek doubled to put two in scoring position. Nick Fortes walked to load the bases before Dillard returned and cleared the bases to tie the game.

"The pitcher that came in started throwing harder than I thought so took the first pitch," Dillard said on his at-bat. "He threw me a changeup, and luckily, I was able to get my head out and hit it down the line."

After stealing third, Dillard scored on a Chase Cockrell single to take a



PHOTO BY: BILLY SCHUERMAN

Head coach Mike Bianco argues with the first-base umpire after a Rebel is called out. Ole Miss defeated Murray State 7-6 on Tuesday.

brief 5-4 lead.

Neither team was able to score in the sixth, but a walk, bunt, fielder's choice and fielding error put two in scoring position for the Racers at the top of the seventh. A single would score the only run of the inning and tie the game at 5-5.

"We had a big rally in the fifth there, but then they answered back," Bianco said. "They executed to get a bunt down. We got a little too aggressive and probably should have thrown the ball to first base. But you have to hand it to them - they played really hard tonight and could have easily won this game."

In a long top half of the eighth, Murray State took a 6-5 lead on a dropped third strike, and Ole Miss tagged the secondary runner in a rundown between second and third base to end it.

With the Rebels down one, the bats went to work with two outs for the second time in the game as Olenek stroked a fastball that plated Kessinger and tied the game at 6-6 en route to the ninth inning.

With nothing going in the top of the ninth, it was Ole Miss and Dillard who ultimately captured the one-run win in the bottom half.

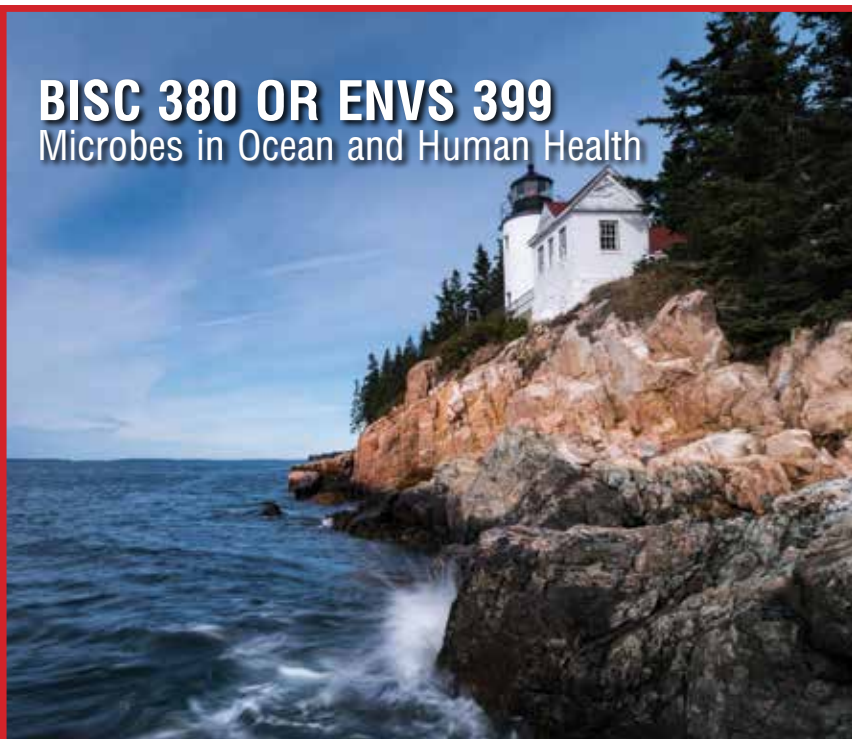
"The whole game, everything offensively seemed

like it started or finished with (Dillard)," Bianco said. "He did it all tonight."

The Rebels will venture out of town for the first time this season Thursday and head west to California for a weekend series against a formidable 2017 Super Regional team in Long Beach State, who sits under .500 on the young season.

"Anyone that follows college baseball knows that Long Beach is a perennial powerhouse on the West Coast," Bianco said. "It's going to be a big test for us on the road."

The series will begin at 8 p.m. CST on Friday.



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